

DOES XYLOCARPUS GRANATUM KOEN. OCCUR ON THE AFRICAN COAST ?

By J. BURTT DAVY.

In his Forest Flora of Portuguese East Africa (p. 27, t. xvi, 1909) the late Dr. T. R. Sim records "*Carapa moluccensis* Lam." as abundant in tidal mud in all the rivers of Mozambique at and north of Quelimane.

Mr. H. N. Ridley has recently pointed out (*Kew Bulletin*, 1938 ; 288) that there has been a good deal of confusion in the names of the two commonest species of *Xylocarpus*, *X. Granatum* Koen. and *X. moluccensis* (Lam.) Roem., "owing to descriptions published by Lamarck based on Rumphius' very bad drawings and descriptions of the Amboina species". He refers the *Carapa moluccensis* of the "Flora of Tropical Africa" (not of Lamarck) to *X. benadirensis* Mattei, which has been collected at several points on the Mozambique Coast (e.g. by Kirk, Otto Kuntze, Honey and Muir), and on the coasts of Zanzibar, Kenya Colony, Italian Somaliland, and Madagascar. This is the mKomafi or mKomavi of the Swahili, and the mFava, mFifi or mFisi of some other coastal peoples. It is most probable, therefore, that it was *X. benadirensis* to which Sim's statements refer.

Unfortunately, however, as Mr. Ridley points out, Sim's figure (t. xvi) shows a staminal tube with the retuse lobes of *X. Granatum* Koen., not the dentate form of *X. benadirensis* Mattei. This raises the question whether *X. Granatum* Koen. does occur on the Mozambique coast. The writer has been in communication with Mr. Ridley on the subject, suggesting the possibility that when Sim was revising his MS. at Kew in 1907, he may perhaps have taken the opportunity to add figures of floral parts from dissections or drawings of *X. moluccensis* in the Kew herbarium. In reply Mr. Ridley writes under date October 13th, 1939 : "As to Sim's figure I think it is probably a mix up. He drew a sketch of *benadirensis* with fruit and then added the flower structure from a picture of *X. Granatum* at Kew". If Sim's dissections of *X. Granatum* were made from his own specimens, and if it is common on the Mozambique Coast, it is strange that other collectors do not appear to have found it there. As Ridley points out, however, *X. Granatum* has got as far as Madagascar and the Seychelles Islands, and "is quite likely eventually to get to East Africa, as *Barringtonia speciosa*

has done of late years, but except for Sim's drawing there is no evidence of its having done so yet".

The other East African *Xylocarpus* is *X. moluccensis* (Lam.) Roem. sec. Merrill, an East Indian species which has been collected at Mombasa, Kenya Colony, and in the Seychelles Islands, Madagascar, Nossibé and Aldabra. Ridley points out that this tree seems to prefer sandy beaches to the tidal mud of the mangroves where *X. benadirensis* grows. *X. moluccensis* (Lam.) Roem. is readily distinguished by the thinner ovate acuminate leaves, which are green when dry, the lax panicle, and the fruit which is only as large as an orange; the staminal tube has an undulate margin.

If any South African botanist should call at Mozambique ports, it would be well to be on the look out for the possible occurrence of *X. Granatum* Koen., which differs from *X. benadirensis* in the bifid lobes of the staminal tube.